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A Theology of Poverty in Today's World

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# Poverty and Scripture

Evangelical Advocacy: A Response to Global Poverty

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## Graduate Level Resources on Scripture and Hunger

Baker, David L. *Tight Fists or Open Hands?: Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law*. Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009.

Any Christian response to today's ever-growing problem of poverty around the globe must be firmly rooted in the teaching of the Bible. David Baker argues here that an understanding of that law is not only fundamental for interpreting the entire Old Testament but is also assumed by the writers of the New Testament. The heart of this book is a study of all the Old Testament concerned with wealth and poverty. Baker's combination of thorough exegesis and modern application makes this book relevant to pastors, scholars, and students in a variety of courses.

Barker, Ash. *Make Poverty Personal: Taking the Poor as Seriously as the Bible Does*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2009.

Poverty is one of the great challenges of the 21st century. It is not new and neither is God's deep concern for the poor--it is a theme deeply woven throughout the Bible. Sadly, churches and individual Christians have too often been blind to this emphasis, or they have been paralyzed into inaction by feelings of helplessness. Barker offers both challenge and hope. Pulling out and reflecting on significant passages from both testaments, he reveals what the Bible says about both the nature of poverty and about how God calls his people to respond. These studies, ideal for either individual or small group use, are interlaced with personal reflections--first-hand accounts from fifteen years of ministry among the poor.

Domeris, William. *Touching the Heart of God: the Social Construction of Poverty Among Biblical Peasants*. New York: T & T Clark, 2007.

Theoreticians create a model of poverty that enables us to define the poor of Iron Age Israel with some precision. Using biblical material from the Hebrew Bible Domeris uses social construction, and a unique model of poverty which includes the dimensions of power and honor and their opposites. The poor in Israel in Iron Age II experienced significant deprivation and capacity failure due to a combination of inadequate land and poor weather as well as the collapse of positive reciprocity. According to the biblical writers, it is these aspects of poverty that touch the heart of God.

Gnanavaram, Masilamani. *Treasure in Heaven and Treasure on Earth: Attitude towards Poverty and Wealth in the New Testament Communities and in the Early Church*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2008.

Hoppe, Leslie J. *There Shall Be No Poor Among You: Poverty in the Bible*. Abingdon, Press, 2004.

*There Shall Be No Poor Among You* is a portrait of the poor and poverty. Hoppe introduces the study with the socioeconomic structures of ancient Israel and Roman Palestine and covers OT and NT. The Bible describes the poor and poverty in a variety of ways. The Bible never idealizes

the reality of material poverty and the oppression of the poor by the rich. God requires humans to seek social justice, so the poor should be a priority of every community of faith. Ancient Israel, early Judaism, Jesus, and the first Christians did not forget the poor, and if believers today wish to be faithful to their biblical heritage, neither can they. *Contents:* The Torah -- The former Prophets -- The latter Prophets -- Wisdom literature -- The Psalms -- Apocalyptic literature -- The New Testament -- The rabbinic tradition.

Longenecker, Bruce W. *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman World*. Grand Rapids,: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010.

Combining historical, exegetical, and theological interests, Bruce Longenecker dispels the widespread notion that Paul had little or no concern for the poor. Longenecker's analysis of Greco-Roman poverty provides the backdrop for a compelling presentation of the importance of care for the poor within Paul's theology and the Jesus-groups he had established. Along the way, Longenecker calls into question a variety of interpretive paradigms — such as Steven J. Friesen's 2004 poverty scale — and offers a fresh vision in which Paul's theological resources are shown to be both historically significant and theologically challenging.

Mitchell, Kenneth R. *Justice and Generosity: The Teaching of the Bible Concerning the Poor*. Baltimore, PublishAmerica Inc., 2008.

Should the poverty that abounds in the world today be a concern for the average Christian, or is this a concern only for those with a special calling to minister to the poor? Mitchell examines all that the Bible says about the poor by providing an exposition of all the passages of Scripture that address a concern for the poor. He begins by examining the many provisions for the poor in the Mosaic Law. He then continues through the Old Testament books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and the Prophets and concern for the poor in the ministry of Jesus, as well as the early church. Justice and generosity toward the poor is a priority with God, and therefore a priority for His people.

Phillips, Thomas E. *Reading Issues of Wealth and Poverty in Luke-Acts*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001.

Sandoval, Timothy J. *The Discourse of Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*. Boston: Brill, 2006.

Sider, Ronald J., ed. *Cry Justice! The Bible on Hunger and Poverty*. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.

Sivatte, Rafael de. *La Biblia y el Mundo de los Pobres y Excluidos*. San Salvador : Centro Monseñor Romero, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas, 2008.

Straub, Gerald Thomas. *When Did I See You Hungry?* Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2002.

Photos and written meditations of those forced to live on the margins of society living in the harshly cruel prison of poverty. Compelling images urge the observer to help relieve the pain and end the misery. Straub spent months living among the poor of San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, Toronto, Rome, Nairobi, Brazil, India, the Philippines, and Jamaica armed only with a pen and a 35-mm camera. A Textual Meditation of Wisdom Across the Centuries, offer thoughts about the challenge to respond to poverty including essays by David Beckman, president of Bread for the World, and Ralph Plumb, president and CEO of Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles and Straub's moving personal journal he kept while taking these photographs. This is a photographic and textual meditation on the plight of the poor, telling the poignant, heartbreaking story of the homeless and poor while challenging and encouraging us to respond to the hungry among us. There is also a film based on this book.

Straub, Gerald Thomas. "When Did I See You Hungry." Videorecording, written and photographed by Gerard Thomas, Straub. Burbank, CA: San Damiano Foundation, 2002.

Summary: "This short film by documentary filmmaker and award-winning author Gerard Thomas Straub is a photographic meditation on the plight of the poor and our responsibility to help. The film features more than 250 ... B & W photographs from Mr. Straub's ... book '**When did I see you hungry?**' Gerard Thomas Straub spent months living among the poor in the impoverished sections of 29 cities in nine nations: India, Brazil, Kenya, Jamaica, the Philippines, Mexico, Italy, Canada, and United States."—37 minutes.

Torvend, Samuel. *Luther and the Hungry Poor: Gathered Fragments*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.

*Contents:* Baskets filled with fragments: eating and drinking in the presence of Jesus -- The church fishes for wealth : early awareness of the hungry poor -- Buying spiritual goods and services : the social implications of justification by grace -- A peasant becomes a priest: the worldly trajectory of baptism -- Consider the broad fields : the biblical invitation to feed the hungry -- Holding all things in common: the Eucharist and social welfare -- Greed is an unbelieving scoundrel: the failure and promise of structured generosity.

Vrolijk, Paul. *Jacob's Wealth: An Examination into the Nature and Role of Material possessions in the Jacob-Cycle (Gen 25:19-35:29)*. Boston: Brill, 2011.